

# Chapter 1.0

## Plan Vision and Background

### 1.1 The Action Plan's Vision

The original Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) was completed in 1992. It told the story of trying to recover a neglected neighborhood while keeping a wary eye on the **human** impact those changes might bring. The new Central Area Action Plan **II** **makes** a new assumption

**that the neighborhood *will* recover, and that, as the economic tide rises, the community *must* provide solutions for its existing residents so they will not be left behind.**

A good portion of that change in perspective, and the recovery of a once-beleaguered district, must be attributed to the success of the original CAAP itself- which laid out a road map for recovery in a number of different areas. Perhaps a more important function of that plan was its ability to get the neighborhood working toward a common agenda.

Action Plan **II** is the community's vision about **managing** the changes that nearly **all** community members see on the horizon. The city's new comprehensive plan, and its focus on creating special places in neighborhoods for business to flourish, for people to gather, for new residents to occupy in more sustainable ways, has provided an excellent organizing principle for the new Action Plan. **It** has added depth and long-term vision to a plan that was **action-oriented**, while benefiting from its predecessor's insistence on workable solutions.

Action Plan **II** has thrown a **wider** net, now gathering communities from the north of Madison, and more solidly focusing on the particular problems of the Squire Park/Spruce **Park/12<sup>th</sup>** Avenue area, while still considering its core the Union **and** Jackson **areas** along 23rd Avenue. **The** new plan focuses more clearly on urban form, with a long-term, yet still action-oriented master plan for the Madison Miller **area**, and an emphasis on urban **design**, zoning for appropriate density, **streetscape** improvements, and amenities at the other nodes.

Action Plan **II** envisions a vibrant multi-cultural community, proud of its **African-American** heritage as well as its many links to other cultures. It is a community taking pains not to shed its cultural **richness** as its economy and opportunity grow. Physically it is pictured as a series of unique individual urban villages and neighborhood **magnets** linked together **in** a **common** economy **and** a shared destiny. It is a community that cares about its youth, and about itself, and that sees an enormous **value** in joint community participation in decisions of consequence. And it is a community that is prepared to take a back seat to no other community in terms of access to capital, local ownership and investment, **and** regional respect. The community sees itself as a

critical player in the city's comprehensive development — being situated for strong, sustainable growth. It is a close-in neighborhood with affordable housing, **safe** streets, and a vibrant cultural , life. It aims to capture the benefits of that growth for the good of the entire **community**. A **final** piece of the puzzle is insisting on access for all community members: access to capital to **start/expand** businesses and **buy/improve** homes, access to decision making on a community basis, access to the volunteer and educational assets of the entire community through partnering, and access to the information and **programs** that can help them in a pinch. By making **sure** that **opportunity** is spread not **just** for **the fortunate**, but for all, **the Central Area Community** lays out a plan for **all** of its members, to grow and prosper, and participate in the **community** and the economy for years into the **future**.

## 1.2 Planning Background

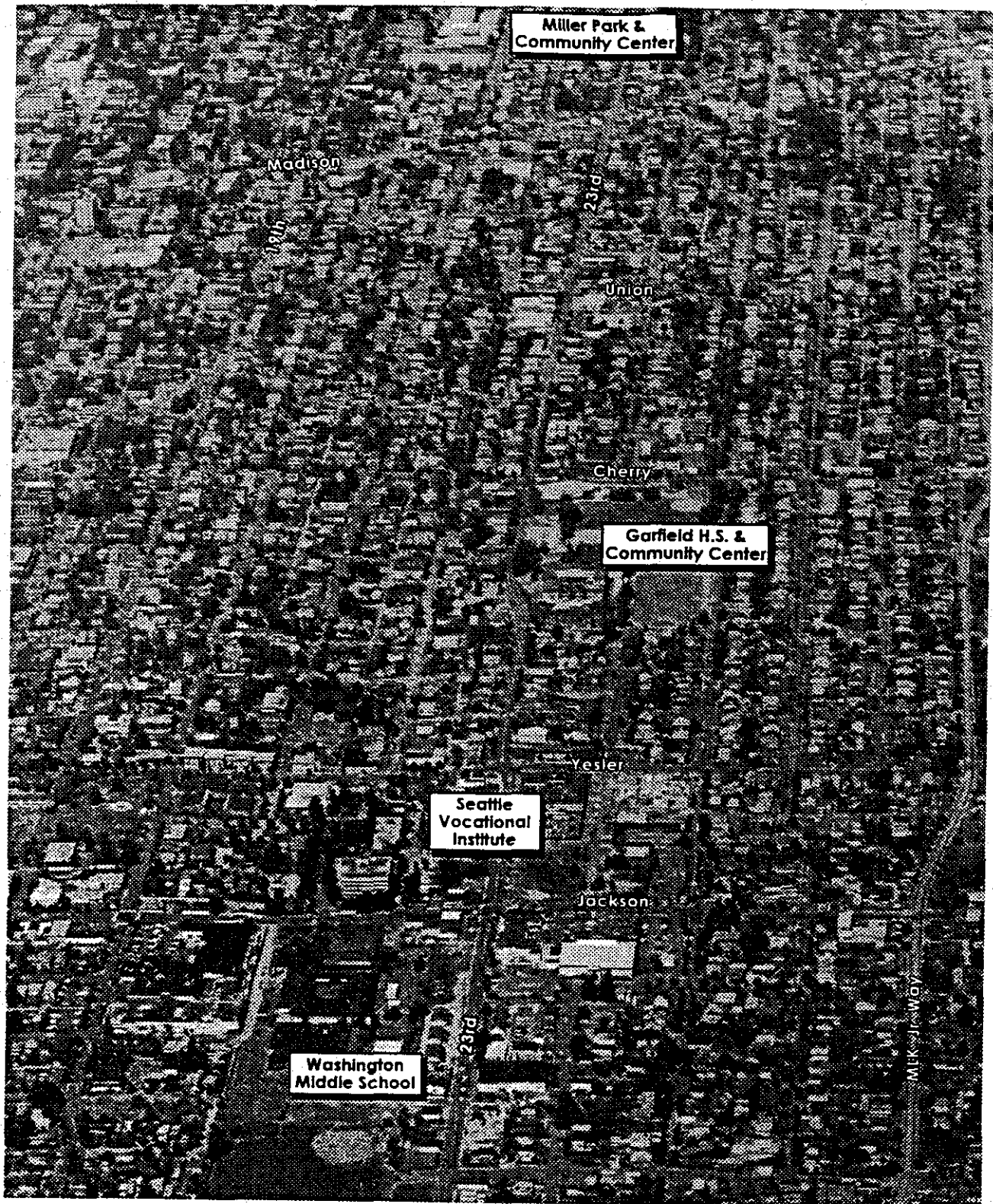
The Central Area Action Plan II **culminates** a process nearly three years in the making. An initial phase of the project identified key issues and organized the community into **planning** areas. The next phase of the project was to analyze previous planning efforts, especially the original **Central Area Action Plan**, and **identify** those elements that needed to be brought forward or studied in the new planning effort. A third phase focused narrowly” on four different neighborhood areas, essentially laying the groundwork for a neighborhood plan in each node. These nodes are **Madison-Miller**, 12th Avenue, 23rd& Jackson, and 23rd& Union. The **final** phase brought issues into a common framework that **allowed** them to be **studied** neighborhood-wide. **In** areas like Urban Design and Zoning, of course, the action continued to be focused at the “node” level.

Throughout the planning effort, volunteers actively took charge of committees and **communities**, becoming true supervisors of the planning effort. Through community meetings, committee meetings, special workshops and events, and large **community** events, more than 2,000 people participated directly in the planning effort. In addition, three mailings, with key information about the plan in various stages, were sponsored by the City of Seattle to every household and business in the district. **Throughout**, a core group of dedicated volunteers framed **all** of this participation, with the help of equally dedicated **consultants**, into a comprehensive neighborhood plan and vision. For **the** last third of the planning **effort**, this group met **almost** weekly.

## 1.3 Action Plan Components

The following key points of the **Central Area Action Plan II** are accompanied in the various plan chapters with an action agenda designed to transform concepts and ideas into realities.

- **The Urban Village Ideal.** Most growth is planned to occur around business districts: combination retail and housing projects in the niche neighborhoods. Some rezoning of land accommodates more housing **around** business centers. This includes improving neighborhood **quality** and maintenance generally.



# CENTRAL AREA

A C T I O N   P L A N   I I

Figure 1  
Aerial View of Central  
Area- 23rd Avenue Corridor

- **Urban Design, transportation, and economic development improvements to create a series of distinct niche neighborhoods in the Central Area.** These niche neighborhoods are the focus of city investments in street and urban design improvements. They complement each other's services, are **linked** by **streets** that work, and are **filled** with better, more complete range of services for community members and **others**.
- **A Madison-Miller Neighborhood Master Plan** to improve conditions for walkers and shoppers, and to create interesting **streetscape** features. Economic development to create a vibrant shopping area that can **capitalize** on its strategic position, and use the angle of the Madison cut-through to design interesting urban spaces, improve overall **walkability**, and ensure sensitive and compatible **infill** development that works on both sides of **Madison**.
- **Union & 23rd Neighborhood.** Defined as the crossroads of the Central Area, with more activity and better district layout that makes use of the width and potential of East Union. Rearrange parking on the street and off to make better use of it, and emphasize the district as a convenience shopping area for local residents and workers.
- **Jackson & 23rd Neighborhood.** Continue and support recent efforts of the Central Area Development Association (CADA) and others to improve **streetscapes**, and increase economic activity in order to continue to bring it into focus as the shopping destination of the Central Area.
- **A 23rd Avenue Corridor project** consisting of lighting and design improvements to link all three of the above neighborhoods together, as well as to link the area with its rich **cultural** history. This may include parking during non-peak **hours** and would visually and functionally complement the **boulevard** envisioned for Martin Luther King, Jr. Way.
- **12th Avenue Neighborhood.** **Institute** street improvements derived from the 1991 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Plan and add a P-2 zoning overlay to enhance **pedestrian** aspects of the 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue Corridor **from Yesler to Boren**. The commercial district will be built around educational and institutional shopping needs, and future improvements **will** be built on an improved relationship between the neighborhood Seattle University, and other minor institutions.
- **Addressing the human "cost of neighborhood improvement.** A **volunteer/staffed** project to identify people and families who maybe **displaced** by rising neighborhood values (and taxes and housing costs), linking them with programs that can help save their homes, and possibly allow them to purchase where they **currently** rent.
- **A focus on homeownership.** Home ownership in the Central Area has been steadily declining for the last three decades. The plan recommends a dramatic expansion **homeownership** programs to increase community investment in the area and particularly to increase access to **homeownership** for more levels of income.

- **Better access to loans for businesses and residents.** Working with **banks** and real estate professionals **to take** a closer look a **loan practices**, to reduce discrimination, **and** give more local residents and business owners greater access to money.
- **A major increase in the Central Area Capital Fund for new projects.** Community Development Corporations have been hobbled by tiny pools of capital. The plan **strongly** recommends that the city build the capital fund for the Central Area to over **\$5** million so that more money is available to implement economic development projects that benefit **the** neighborhood.
- **Streets that work for pedestrians, bikes, buses and cars.** Create Central' Area **streets** that hum **with** activity, shopping, walking, and alternate **transportation** that link **people** with employment and employment centers. **Streetscapes** will be filled with interesting design linked to a rich, **culturally-diverse** history. Corridors tie together the community, linked by greenery, amenities, and a sense of grace — suitable for strolling, biking, or driving.
- **Gateways, Spaces, and Gathering Places.** Community gardens, open **spaces**, gathering places throughout the many neighborhoods should be financed by the City to **support** the growth in families. The most ambitious of these is the Central Gateway project, which spans from the Lloyd's Rocket Property to developing a left turn at the corner of **Boren & Jackson**. This **would** dress up several critical entry points into the Central Area. These improvements increase **public** safety, community pride, and build a positive image, while encouraging involvement **through** joint projects for **the** good of the neighborhood.
- **Building a new Central Area image for the city and for the community.** It is not enough to have, an improving community: its story must be told. The Plan suggests marketing the Central Area, **telling** about its good news, changing its image in the city, both for business' sake and for residents' pride.
- **Integrating information resources, reducing duplication, and providing better access** to human services, housing programs, community resources, assistance and other services designed to assist community members.
- **A schedule of improvements and a follow-up program:** The plan will not gather dust. A list of prioritized projects, and a schedule for completion that is provided to the city **and** dreir guarantee to check in with the community on progress regularly. **In** the community, organizations are identified which will help keep the pressure on, and organize the community and financial resources to complete elements of the plan.

The Executive Plan Outline summarizes the key strategies, actions, and recommendations for each of these important plan components. The remaining chapters deal with each in greater detail.